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SEARCH REQUEST FORM

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Please provide a detailed statement of the search topic, and describe as specifically as possible the subject matter to be searched. Include the elected species or structures, keywords, synonyms, acronyms, and registry numbers, and combine with the concept or utility of the invention. Define any terms that may have a special meaning. Give examples or relevant citations, authors, etc, if known. Please attach a copy of the cover sheet, pertinent claims, and abstract.

Title of Invention: Online Electronic Dispute Resolution

Inventors (please provide full names): Vaidyanathan et al.

Earliest Priority Filing Date: 15 Feb. 2000

**For Sequence Searches Only* Please include all pertinent information (parent, child, divisional, or issued patent numbers) along with the appropriate serial number.*

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Appl: # 09/804159

Priority Feb. 15, 2000

Examiner Naresh VIG
CPK5- 7C24
305-3372

- Online dispute Resolution
- Automatic decision making
- Store Results
- Analyze Results for decision making
- (- ~~Neural Network~~ using "neural networks" may get some hits)



AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 16, 20-22, 25, 26, 27, 30, and 56 cancel claims 18, 19, 23, 24 and 74, and add new claims 75-92 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for resolving an electronic commerce dispute involving one or more parties, comprising:
 - receiving from at least one party case information that describes the dispute;
 - applying a case-based reasoning system to the case information to produce a result for use in selection of a mode of resolving the dispute in accordance with an online dispute resolution process; and
 - presenting the result of the application of the case-based reasoning system to the case information to the one or more parties.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically selecting one of two modes of resolving the dispute based on the result from the case-based reasoning system, the first mode requiring the online dispute resolution process being [completely] driven by an electronic agent to assist the parties in resolving the dispute and the second mode involving a human dispute resolution specialist.
3. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the case-based reasoning system contains a history file.
4. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the history file contains patterns and precedents, further comprising applying the patterns and precedents to generate an outcome prediction.
5. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising presenting the outcome prediction to the parties.
6. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the outcome prediction includes one or more likely outcomes and associated probabilities of occurrence.

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7. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving settlement position from the parties.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising automatically settling the dispute if the settlement positions satisfy a predetermined criteria.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the predetermined criteria relates to a monetary settlement position.
10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the predetermined criteria relates to a non-monetary settlement position.
11. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the dispute resolution specialist resolves the dispute by transitioning from a mediation stage to an arbitration stage.
12. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the dispute resolution specialist generates a final recommended resolution.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the final recommended resolution is accepted by the one or more parties.
14. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising creating a contract between the one or more parties stating the willingness to abide by the recommended resolution.
15. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising communicating among the parties using a plurality of communication modes.

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16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the communication modes include a [private] public messaging mode in which communication is automatically shared between all of the parties and the dispute resolution specialist, and a [public] private messaging mode in which communication for a given one of the parties is automatically shared only between that one of the parties and the dispute resolution specialist.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the communication mode is selected by the dispute resolution specialist.

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20. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing visual cues to highlight agreements between the parties.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising visually highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a [meta-rating] forum storing data on [the performance of a particular party] participation of a buyer or seller in dispute resolution process to resolve electronic commerce disputes in an electronic marketplace.

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25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [23]~~22~~, wherein the data relates to compliance of a participant to the final decision made in the resolution of the dispute.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [23]~~22~~, further comprising highlighting an offender in the dispute resolution system.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising providing a market-based system for assigning [a] the dispute resolution specialist to a particular dispute.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the dispute resolution is provided as an insurance covering transactions.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising requiring a seller in a transaction to be a registered subscriber before a transaction is insured.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising showing a visual indicia to indicate membership in the dispute resolution process.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the visual indicia is a medallion.

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56. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving case information that describes an electronic commerce dispute from one or more parties to the dispute;
comparing the case information to facts of previously resolved disputes to produce a result for use in selection of a mode of resolving the dispute in accordance with a dispute resolution process; and
presenting the result of the comparison to the parties.

57. (Previously Added) The method of claim 56, wherein comparing the case information to facts of previously resolved disputes comprises:
maintaining a database that stores facts and outcomes of previously resolved disputes;
searching the database to identify previously resolved disputes with facts that are similar to the case information.

58. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57, wherein presenting the result comprises presenting the outcomes of identified previously resolved disputes.

59. (Previously Added) The method of claim 58, wherein presenting the outcomes comprises summarizing the outcomes of the identified previously resolved disputes.

60. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57, wherein presenting the result comprises:

generating an outcome prediction as a function of the facts and outcomes of the identified disputes; and

presenting the outcome prediction to the parties.

61. (Previously Added) The method of claim 60, wherein the outcome prediction includes at least one likely outcome.

62. (Previously Added) The method of claim 61, wherein the outcome prediction includes associated probabilities of occurrence of the at least one likely outcome.

63. (Previously Added) The method of claim 61, further comprising presenting the at least one likely outcome to the parties as a potential resolution of the dispute.

64. (Previously Added) A system comprising:

a database to store facts and outcomes of previously resolved disputes; and

a server to receive case information that describes an electronic commerce dispute from one or more parties to the dispute via a network, wherein the server compares the case information to the facts of previously resolved disputes stored by the database to produce a result for use in selection of a mode of resolving the dispute, and presents a result of the comparison to the parties via the network.

65. (Previously Added) The system of claim 64, wherein the server searches the database to identify previously resolved disputes with facts that are similar to the case information.

66. (Previously Added) The system of claim 65, wherein the server presents the result of the comparison by presenting the outcomes of identified previously resolved disputes.

67. (Previously Added) The system of claim 66, wherein the server summarizes the outcome of identified previously resolved disputes.

68. (Previously Added) The system of claim 65, wherein the server presents the result of the comparison by generating an outcome prediction as a function of the facts and outcomes of the identified disputes, and presenting the outcome prediction to the parties.

69. (Previously Added) The system of claim 68, wherein the outcome prediction includes at least one likely outcome.

70. (Previously Added) The system of claim 69, wherein the outcome prediction includes associated probabilities of occurrence of the at least one likely outcome.

71. (Previously Added) The system of claim 69, wherein the server presents the at least one likely outcome to the parties as a potential resolution of the dispute.

72. (Previously Added) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
determining a current mode of resolving the dispute; and
automatically selecting a communication mode based on the determination.

73. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [23]22, further comprising providing the data to the parties to assist the resolution of the dispute.

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75. (New) A system comprising:

a computer network; and

a server coupled to the computer network that receives case information that describes an electronic commerce dispute from one or more parties to the dispute via the network, and compares the case information to facts of previously resolved disputes to automatically select a resolution mode comprising one of (i) a direct negotiation mode that allows the parties to directly negotiate a resolution to the dispute via the computer network, (ii) a conciliation mode that allows the parties to negotiate the resolution to the dispute through a mediator, and (iii) mediation mode that allows a mediator to propose a resolution to the dispute.

76.(New) The system of claim 75, wherein the server provides a pre-programmed recommended resolution to at least one of the parties based on the comparison.

77.(New) A method for encouraging parties to an electronic commerce dispute to resolve the dispute through direct negotiation via a computer network comprising:

maintaining a database that stores facts and outcomes of previously resolved electronic commerce disputes;

receiving case information that describes the electronic commerce dispute from one or more of the parties to the dispute via the network;

searching the database to identify previously resolved disputes with facts that are similar to the case information;

identifying at least one likely outcome of the dispute based on the outcomes of the identified previously resolved disputes; and

presenting the identified likely outcomes to the parties as a potential resolution to the dispute to assist the parties in negotiating a resolution to the dispute.

78.(New) A method for integrating an online dispute resolution system with an electronic marketplace to allow users of the electronic marketplace to resolve disputes and provide users of the electronic assurance that disputes will be resolved comprising:

providing an electronic marketplace as a website that is accessed by users via a computer network and enables the users to buy and sell items;

indicating within the electronic marketplace website the availability of a dispute resolution system that is coupled to the computer network to resolve disputes between the users of the electronic marketplace;

embedding uniform resource locators associated with the dispute resolution system within a hypertext markup language application for the website to enable users of the electronic marketplace to access the dispute resolution system from the electronic marketplace; and

displaying media objects within the website that are associated with users of the electronic marketplace,

wherein the appearance of the media objects is related to data maintained by the online dispute resolution system that is related to use of the dispute resolution system by the users.

79.(New) A method comprising:

providing an electronic marketplace that is accessed by users via a computer network and enables the users to buy and sell items; and

indicating the availability of a dispute resolution system to resolve disputes between the users of the electronic marketplace by displaying to the users one or more medallion associated with the dispute resolution system within the electronic marketplace.

80.(New) The method of claim 79, further comprising displaying the media objects to indicate which of the users are members in the dispute resolution system.

81.(New) The method of claim 80, further comprising controlling the appearance of the media objects based on data maintained by the dispute resolution system that describes the use of the dispute resolution system by the users.

82.(New) The method of claim 81, further comprising controlling the appearance of the media objects based on participation of the users within the dispute resolution processes and compliance with results of the dispute resolution process.

83.(New) A method for indicating to users of an electronic marketplace whether other users of the electronic marketplace participate in an online dispute resolution system comprising:

providing an electronic marketplace via a website that is accessed by users via a computer network and enables the users to buy and sell items;

displaying media objects received from the dispute resolution system and associated with users of the electronic marketplace that participate in the dispute resolution system within the website,

wherein the appearance of the media objects is related to data maintained by a server associated with the dispute resolution system relating to participation of the users of the electronic marketplace in the dispute resolution system.

84.(New) The method of claim 83, wherein displaying media objects comprises displaying medallions within web pages associated with users of the electronic marketplace that participate in the dispute resolution system.

85. (New) An online dispute resolution system comprising a computing system that performs a computer-assisted multi-mode dispute resolution process for resolving a dispute between two parties, wherein the computing system:

performs an analysis of the dispute and present pre-programmed recommended resolutions based on the analysis in a first mode;

performs a match of needs of the two parties as defined by the dispute to resolve the dispute in a second mode;

provides a medium for the parties to independently resolve the dispute in a third mode; and

assigning a dispute resolution specialist to resolve the dispute in a fourth mode upon failure to reach a resolution in at least one of the other modes.

86. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the dispute resolution specialist utilizes a message exchange of the computing system to interact with the parties to reach a recommended resolution.

87. (New). The method of claim 85, wherein the computing system assigns the dispute resolution specialists

88. (New) An online dispute resolution system comprising:
a software program to automatically assemble case information that describes an electronic commerce dispute between parties from records provided by the parties,
wherein the software module presents sample resolutions to the parties to aid the parties in resolving the case, and disaggregates elements of the dispute and presents the case information in a form that identifies areas of agreement between the parties.

89. (New) The system of claim 88, further comprising a case base reasoning system that processes the case information that identifies similar past cases, and presents one or more settlement proposals and likely outcomes for the parties to assist the parties in resolving the dispute.

90. (New) The online dispute resolution system of claim 88, further comprising a software program to prompt settlement between the parties.

91. (New) A method comprising:
training a dispute resolution specialist by requiring the dispute resolution specialist to experience transactions within online marketplaces including at least an auction site;
presenting simulated online dispute resolution cases to the dispute resolution specialists to assess the skills of the dispute resolution specialists; and
assigning online disputes to the dispute resolution specialists only upon completion of the training and successful resolution of the simulated online dispute resolution cases.

92. (New) An online dispute resolution system comprising:

a first software program operating on a computing system to assemble case information that describes an electronic commerce dispute between parties from records provided by the parties; and

a second software program operating on the computing system to assist a dispute resolution specialist in identifying similar cases from a historical database of past cases.